

What to do? How to act? Who to be?
A study of self-identity and transition
for Samoan secondary school students



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BACKGROUND

- Youth bulge.
- School to work transition 'bottleneck'.
- Education and labour are the MAJOR issues for youth.
- Social, economic, and political instability related to poverty of opportunity.
- Lack of youth participation in the issues of concern to them.
- A greater understanding of self-identity construction during youth required.

RESEARCH AIM/QUESTIONS

- Research Aim:
 1. To explore how secondary school students in Samoa construct their self-identity prior to post-secondary transition; and
 2. To understand the perceived impact of this on their lived experiences and progress towards sustainable livelihoods

METHOD

- A two stage multi-method approach to data collection
- Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997)
 - Adapted for youth participants in Samoa
- Semi-structured interviews
 - Acquiring the narrative behind the photo's
- Wang, C., & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education and Behavior*, 24, 369-387.

THE PROCESS...

- Site selection
 - Gatekeeper access
 - 3 Schools (public, private, and mission)
 - Rural/urban
- Youth recruitment and demographics
 - Introductory presentation
 - Random purposive sampling
 - Consent
 - 23 Participants (year 12)





Samoaan life

Climbing the tree as a metaphor for success



Future work role
Bonding with father
Motivation to succeed and do something different



A source of income for the family



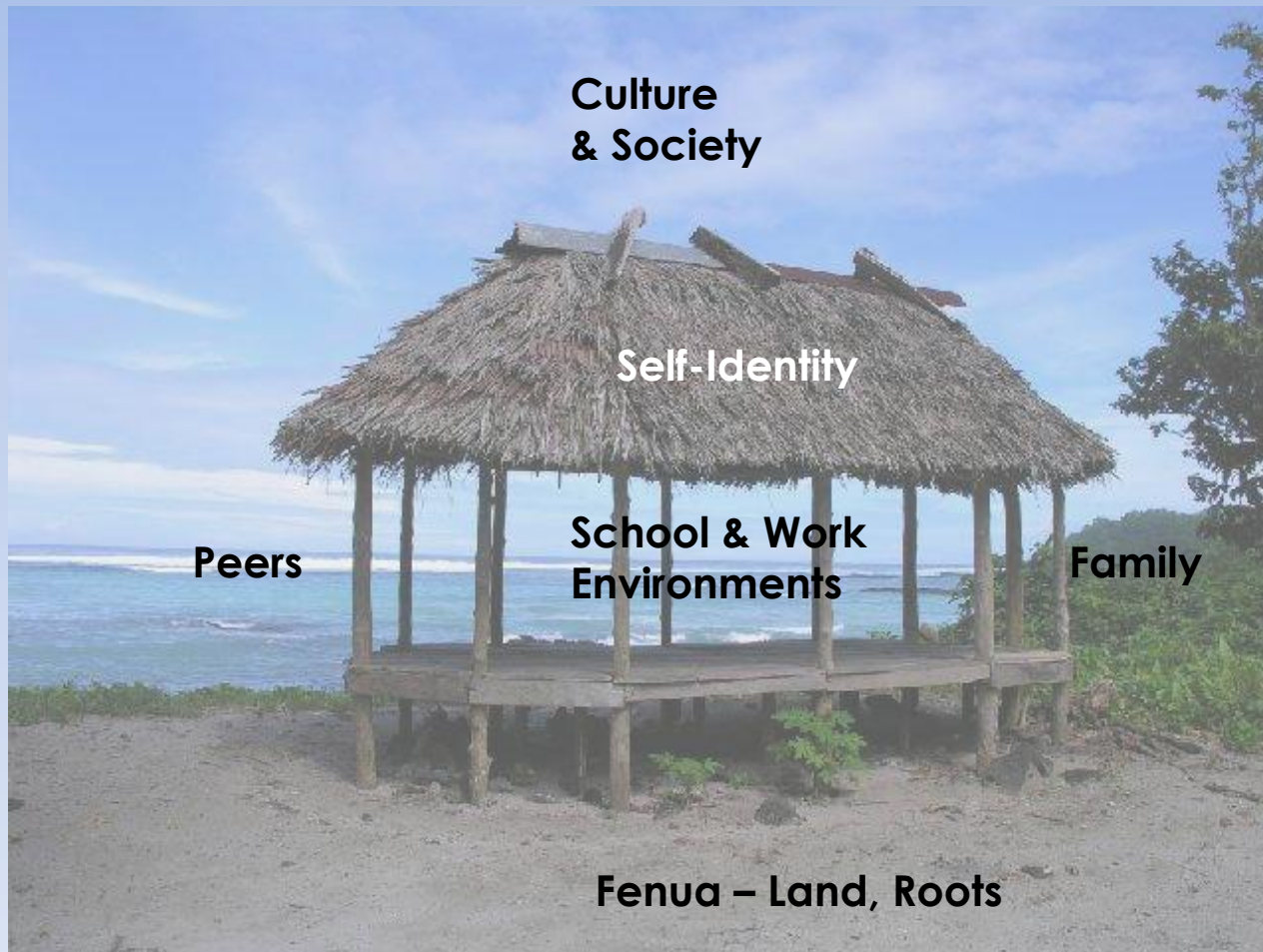
Shelter
Accomplishment



Participant response...

- “...the tree has got too much branches. On reflecting on myself, I don't want to be a tree that has too much branches, going there, saying this, saying that, going too many places, you don't know your aim, and I still aim to be a doctor. ...I stayed home to take care of my granddad. ...He got his shoulder banged too much. I had to massage it for him when I was small. ...he said your hands are like the hands of a doctor, so he wants me to be a doctor. I was good in science, I was always good in science. I am proud of myself. I thank god when I think about the person I am, I am a good person and don't want to be like that tree you know, today I study science, tomorrow I study ...commerce, next day I study art, ...but if I am stable, this means I have roots. I have a success in life I will become what I want to be.”
- Participant M1 – Photo 10

CONTEXTUAL DOMAINS OF IDENTITY FORMATION



Strengths of Photovoice...

- An excellent means to initiate dialogue
- Ownership of the process and outcomes
- Empowering process
- Visual learning and expression
- Depth of information

Weaknesses of Photovoice...

- Qualitative focus
- Can be costly
- Requires efficient coordination of participants

QUESTIONS?

